

8 December 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Associate Chairman, National Intelligence Council

THROUGH : National Intelligence Officer for East Asia  
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FROM : [REDACTED]  
Assistant NIO for East Asia

SUBJECT : Seminar at Harvard on North Korea

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1. As you know, I led a group comprised of [REDACTED] of OER, [REDACTED] of the NIC and myself to Harvard on 4-5 December to brief on the economic situation in North Korea and to engage in substantive discussions with faculty members on Korea at the East Asian Institute. I was surprised and pleased at the warmth of our reception and the interest shown in the subject matter and in the Agency generally.

2. The forum for our basic presentation was the New England Colloquium on Korea which draws in a variety of academics, students and others interested in Korea from the greater Boston area. Our presentation on the evening of 4 December drew the largest audience to date -- some fifty to sixty people ranging from prestigious professors to local ethnic Korean residents. There was particular interest in our ability to present a macro picture of the North Korean economy from very limited sources ( [REDACTED] presentation) as well as a very micro view of daily life in the DPRK ( [REDACTED] discussion). By the level of attention, the questions and the extensive informal discussion which followed the enthusiasm of the audience was clearly demonstrated. We spoke for in excess of three and one-half hours. Many of the questions probed for insights into our analytic techniques none were even remotely hostile.

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3. Our formal presentation was followed by a three hour discussion on Korean affairs both North and South on 5 December with members of the Harvard faculty involved with Korea. The exchange was lively and informative with the faculty members probing for our views on a wide variety of issues and freely offering their own. They were particularly interested in imparting data on sociological aspects of Korea which they quite correctly surmised were not given great attention in government analysis. Indeed, I found that their views in this area provided new insights into our understanding of the leadership situation in the South and had potential application for our study of the North as well.

4. I was greatly encouraged by our exchange and hope to be part of similar efforts in the future. We tentatively discussed a similar meeting on South Korea in the spring if and when the air of crisis in the ROK passes. I would also suggest that exchanges of this sort could prove a particularly valuable adjunct to the work of OGSR's new Social Science Research Division if not as yet considered.

5. I believe that we may safely consider this session the second academic seminar held this year under NIO/EA auspices, the first being the symposium on Japan held last April.

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cc: CAR